VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**News Release**

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*Washington, D.C.* -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has reported to the Office of Management and Budget that it is on schedule to implement renovated applications to meet Year 2000 computer requirements by early spring.

"I'm proud we continue to make such great progress toward our goal," said Harold Gracey, acting assistant secretary of VA's new Office of Information and Technology. "Veterans can rest assured that VA will provide timely benefits payments and high quality health care without interruption as we pass into the new millennium."

VA has renovated 94 percent of more than 300 applications supporting 11 mission critical system areas reflecting VA business functions, including compensation and pension, loan guaranty, insurance, and medical computer and corporate administration systems. The department also has validated 84 percent and implemented into production 61 percent of the applications.

Renovation, which concerns the modification, replacement or elimination of an application to make it Year 2000 compliant, is the second of a simultaneous four-phase program VA has undertaken to resolve Year 2000 problems. The renovation phase is scheduled for completion in September. The department completed the first assessment phase in January. The third phase -- validation of new or changed code for date handling and functionality -- is scheduled for completion in January 1999. The fourth phase -- implementation of applications into production -- is scheduled for completion by March 1999.

VA has completed implementation and closed out three of the 11 mission critical areas: the National Cemetery System, Financial Management and Vocational Rehabilitation. The department has renovated more than 85 percent of mission critical education, compensation and pension programs. VA is more than 98 percent complete on renovations and near completion of implementation of applications necessary to make Veterans Health Administration computer systems Year 2000 compliant.

Gracey said VA continues to aggressively work with manufacturers of biomedical equipment, telecommunication service providers and commercial off-the-shelf products used at VA facilities to get the information necessary to support Year 2000 compliance.

"We strongly support the President's 'Good Samaritan' law, which would encourage private service providers to fully disclose Year 2000 compliance status for their products used by agencies," said Gracey.